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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8348  
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 000910

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SRAP, SCA/FO, SCA/A, EUR/RPM  
STATE PASS USAID FOR ASIA/SCAA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/09/2019

TAGS: PGOV PREL KDEM EAID AF

SUBJECT: GOVERNOR MANGAL TELLS CHARGE OF HELMAND'S SECURITY  
AND POLITICAL CHALLENGES

REF: REF KABUL 587

Classified By: ChargQ d'Affaires Francis Ricciardone for reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d)

Summary

¶1. (C) ChargQ dQ,Affaires Ricciardone and Helmand Governor Gulabuddin Mangal discussed Helmand's pivotal place in the broader Afghan strategy, security and policing, governance, and development, in an April 8 meeting in Kabul. Governor Mangal told the Ambassador that he had proposed to Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) Director Jelani Popal that the IDLG host a meeting with the United States, United Kingdom, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), and others to discuss security in Helmand, including coordination between the incoming U.S. forces and Afghan troops. Mangal emphasized the importance of increasing security forces in Helmand, particularly improved policing, which he called weak, corrupt, and drug-ridden.

HelmandQ,s Pivotal Role

¶2. (C) In their first meeting, ChargQ dQ,Affaires Ricciardone and Helmand Governor Gulabuddin Mangal discussed Helmand's pivotal place in the broader Afghanistan strategy and the importance of Governor Mangal's strong leadership in ensuring the success of efforts in Helmand. Ambassador Ricciardone told Mangal that it was appropriate that his first meeting with an Afghan Governor since his arrival in Kabul was with Mangal, given the importance of Helmand strategically and Mangal's own strong personal reputation. Mangal agreed with the characterization of the difficult strategic challenges faced in Helmand, but he emphasized his readiness to seize the opportunities presented by the influx of U.S. troops this summer, and welcomed enhanced cooperation and coordination with the United States.

Security and Policing

¶3. (C) Governor Mangal told the ChargQ that strengthening security was one of his primary goals. While the increase in troops is welcome, ISAF forces cannot bring security by themselves, but will require close collaboration with Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) Q particularly in the more populated areas, starting with Lashkar Gah. He said that he had proposed to Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) Director Jelani Popal that the IDLG host a meeting with the United States, United Kingdom, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), and others to discuss security in Helmand, including coordination between the incoming U.S. forces and Afghan troops. He also highlighted the shortage of ANA and ANP forces, and the poor quality of the ANP, which he called weak, corrupt, and

drug-ridden.

Development

¶4. (C) Governor Mangal updated the ChargQ on several of the major AID-funded projects underway in Helmand, including the Kajaki Dam and the nearly complete civilian air strip in Lashkar Gah. The ChargQ highlighted the importance of economic development activity as an important element of the strategy to diminish the attraction of the insurgency for young men, and welcomed an invitation from the Governor to attend the opening of the air strip upon its completion. Noting the relationship of economic development to governance, the Ambassador applauded Governor MangalQ,s focus on governance as a means of providing quality service to the people of Helmand.

Comment

¶5. (C) Governor Mangal sought the meeting with the ChargQ, as well as a meeting earlier in the week with the UK Ambassador, after telling the State Department PRT representative in Helmand that he would visit Kabul because his job is in jeopardy as a result of recent allegations tying him to questionable land deals in Helmand and his poor relations with President Karzai. Mangal is coming under pressure for a land-give-away scheme, developed by a Commission under his authority, which resulted in the recent removal of HelmandQ,s top Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) officials by the MoA Minister. Mangal insists he did not

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take any land and the PRT does not believe it likely he was personally involved. However, the accusations and pressure to more vigorously support President Karzai are taking their toll; Mangal admitted to the State PRT representative that he is very tired and he has a nagging illness that has produced a noticeable weight loss.

RICCIARDONE